



File Code: 1950

Date: March 8, 2011

Re: 2011 Proposed Projects on the Darrington District

Dear Forest User:

The Forest Service and partners are analyzing a number of projects on the Darrington Ranger District. Implementation for projects is scheduled to occur both during the late summer and fall of 2011 and into 2012, with some projects to be completed or awarded in 2012. The Forest Service is scoping for issues that the environmental analysis should address. Please provide comments on issues and scope of analysis by April 10, 2011 for the projects below:

Trailhead and Road Reconstruction Projects

1. **Boulder River Trailhead and Road Storage for Road to Trail Use** - Construct a new Boulder River trailhead at milepost 3.0 off French Creek Road 2010 to provide an improved parking area. Road 2010 would be closed (storage) from the new trailhead to the current trailhead at about milepost 3.7. The new trailhead would include a toilet, large gravel parking area, picnic tables, and signs. Location: Mile Post 3.0 to 3.7 on Road 2010, T32N, R08E, Sections 19 and 20, west of Darrington, WA
2. **Lost Creek Bridge Replacement** - Replace Lost Creek Bridge, which is an undersized and deteriorating timber bridge with a longer steel or concrete structure. The bridge is located on Road 49, North Fork of the Sauk River drainage. T30N, R11E, Section 13
3. **Darrington District Road Repair** - Repair currently known winter-damaged sites on Roads 2060, 49, 18, and 2040 with reconstruction of road prism, low water ford construction or culvert upgrades. Roads locations: Clear Creek, Squire Creek, N.F. of the Sauk River and Segelsen Ridge.

Special Use Permit Projects:

4. **Reauthorize Helicopter Use** - Reauthorize helicopter outfitter & guide use for transporting clients by helicopter to authorized sites on the Darrington District.

Minerals Project:

5. **Green Hope Mine Helicopter Access** - Approve a Plan of Operation for a helicopter drop point on closed Road 1870 near Swede Creek to access an unpatented mining claim, for equipment drop off and storage, and removal of locatable minerals with motorized hand tools. T.33N, R.08E, Section 26.

Administrative and Recreational Site Maintenance Projects:

6. **Radio Building Replacement at the Darrington Compound and Lost Creek Ridge Sites** - Replace the current buildings housing radio equipment on the Darrington District office compound, located in Darrington, Snohomish County at T 32N, R09E, Section 14 and on Lost Creek Ridge at T30N, R12E, Section 6.
7. **Gold Basin Campground Water System Upgrade** - Replace the water system at the Gold Basin Campground. T30N, R08E, Sections 23 and 24,



Aquatic Habitat Restoration Projects:

8. **Riprap removal on closed Road 25** –Removal of approximately 900 ft. of riprap along the bank of the Suiattle River, located on the closed portion of Rd 25, east of Circle Creek. T32N, R11E; and Section 24, northeast of Darrington, WA.
9. **Marsh Pond Fish Access Restoration** – Removal of a fish barrier (non-functioning, metal fish way) in the stream to Marsh Pond and adjust stream gradient to re-establish fish access to Marsh Pond. The project may also involve modification of the existing pond berm to meet the objectives of improving fish passage while preserving wetland functions and values. T32N, R11E; and Section 14, northeast of Darrington, WA

Snohomish County Road Project:

10. **Mt. Loop (Road 20) Emergency Repairs** – Snohomish County is pursuing emergency repair of the flood damaged Mountain Loop Highway at MP 20 and MP 23.0 in the S.F. Stillaguamish River drainage east of Granite Falls, WA, T30N, R09E, Section 23 and T30N, R10E, Section 18

Federal Highways Emergency Repair for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) Projects:

11. **Lower Suiattle Road 26 ERFO Repair at Mile Post 6.0** - The Western Division of Federal Highways is pursuing a 2150 foot long reroute at MP 6.0 of flood-damaged Road 26. (T33N R 10E Section 13)
12. **Upper Suiattle Road 26 ERFO Repair at Mile Posts 20.8 , 20.9 and 22.9** - The Western Division of Federal Highways is pursuing flood repairs of Rd 26 with road reconstruction at MP 20.8, extensions to the bridge at Downey Creek (MP 20.9) and repair of road approach at Sulphur Creek (MP 22.9) (T32N R 12E Section 14, 15 and 24)

Below is listed the purpose and need for each of the proposed actions, a brief project description, with the name and phone number of the project leader or USFS liaison. Maps of the projects (Figure 1 to Figure 4) with the location of the proposed actions are attached.

1. Forest Service Trail #734- Boulder River Trailhead Reconstruction and Road Storage to Trail – contact Carol Gladsjo Project Leader, 360-436-2316, Figure 1

Purpose and Need: There is a need for trailheads with safe and adequate parking and for trail systems to meet recreational use guidelines.

Proposed Action: This project proposes to construct a new Boulder River trailhead at a location about 0.7 miles back from the current Boulder River Trailhead which currently is located at milepost 3.7 of French Creek Road # 2010 (the rest of Road 2010 is currently closed). The new trailhead would be located where there is more space for parking and vehicle turnaround (20 to 30 vehicles) and include a new toilet, picnic table and sign board. There would be 0.7 mile of Road 2010 closed (put in storage) and used as an extension of the Boulder River Trail (#734) until a new trail route can be established. There would be no additional treatment of the remainder of Road 2010 (upper French Creek drainage) at this time.

NEPA Document: Decision Memo or EA. Decision Date: October 2011.

**2. Lost Creek Bridge Replacements –contact Peter Wagner, Bridge Engineer, 360-856-2621
Figure 3**

Purpose and Need: There is a need for administrative and recreational use access in the N.F. of the Sauk River drainage, southeast of Darrington.

Proposed Actions: At MP 4.5 of Road 49, the deteriorating timber bridge across Lost Creek will be replaced with a steel or concrete structure. The new bridge length will be approximately 70 to 80 feet to better span the active channel. The bridge width will match the existing roadway.

NEPA Document: Decision Memo. Decision Date: June, 2011

**3. Darrington District Road Repair – contact Jim Mitchell, Project Leader, 360-856-2620
Figures 1 and 3**

Purpose and Need: There is a need for administrative and recreational use access across the Darrington Ranger District.

Proposed Actions: Roads damaged over the winter months are proposed for repair to regain access to trailheads, climbing routes and recreational use areas. Known damaged sites are located on Roads 2060, 49, 18, and 2040 with need of road prism reconstruction, low water ford construction or culvert upgrades. Roads are located within the Clear Creek, Squire Creek, N.F. of the Sauk River drainages and near Segelsen Pass.

NEPA Document: Decision Memo. Decision Date: June, 2011

4. Reauthorize Helicopter Use - contact Project Leader Adrienne Hall at 360-436-2318

Purpose and Need: There is a need for continued recreational opportunities through outfitter & guides services with clients transported to authorized areas on the Darrington Ranger District.

Proposed Action: To continue commercial outfitter & guide services through the reauthorization of 50 service days each year to transport clients by helicopter to and from designated areas (outside of wilderness) on National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Darrington Ranger District. The designated areas include: Helena Lake, Peek-a-boo Lake, Goodman Lake, Thornton Lake, South Lake, Myrtle Lake, unnamed lake near Box Mountain, and Stillaguamish Peak/Ridge. Activities to be authorized include flying people, equipment and supplies to and from designated areas.

NEPA Document: Decision Memo. Decision Date: June, 2011

**5. Green Hope Mine Helicopter Access - contact Project Leader Todd Griffin at 360-677-2258
Figure 1**

Purpose and Need: Under federal mining laws, the Forest Service is required to analyze and approve (with modification, if necessary) proposed Plans of Operation for extracting unpatented locatable minerals that could potentially affect National Forest surface resources, in a manner that is consistent with environmental laws and Forest Service regulations (36 CFR 228, Subpart A).

Proposed Action: The claimants of the Green Hope mining claim propose a Plan of Operation to access their unpatented and valid lode claim via helicopter, located at the end of closed road 1870, near the headwaters of Swede Creek. Activities to be authorized in the Plan of Operation include using a helicopter drop/pick up site on the abandoned road bed of Road 1870 (requiring some minor clearing of alder and low growing vegetation), delivering motorized hand tools and removing bulk samples of jade with a helicopter, using motorized hand tools to mine the jade from an outcrop, and storing equipment in a portable shelter.

NEPA Document: DM - Decision Date: July, 2011

6. Radio Building Replacement on the Darrington District Compound and Lost Creek Ridge, contact Project leader, John West 425-888-8791, Figures 1 and 3

Purpose and Need: There is a need for safe and secure sites for radio communication equipment in order to provide consistent radio communication for the Darrington District.

Proposed Actions: Replace the current radio shack on the Darrington District compound and Lost Creek Ridge with prefabricated 8'x 8'x 6' utility shelters. The buildings sit on outrigger supports for a footprint of 12' x12', with no need for ground disturbance. The Darrington District compound shelter is located next to a free standing antenna tower and will be wired into the existing electrical grid, while Lost Creek Ridge shelter (outside of wilderness) will have attached solar panels and antenna tower.

NEPA Document: Categorical Exclusion checklist. Decision Date: April 2011

7. Gold Basin Campground Water System Upgrade, contact Project Leader Carol Gladsjo, 360-436-2316 Figure 2

Purpose and Need: There is a need for safe water systems for recreational users at designated locations within the S.F. of the Stillaguamish River drainage.

Proposed Actions: Replace the deteriorating water system in Gold Basin Campground to meet Forest policy and guidelines.

NEPA Document: Categorical Exclusion checklist. Decision Date: June 2011

8. Riprap removal on closed Road 25, contact USFS Project Liaison, Phil Eidenberg-Noppe, Figure 4

Purpose and Need: There is a need for Riparian Reserves that contribute to fish productivity.

Proposed Action: Remove 900 linear feet of riprap from along the Suiattle River that was placed to protect Road 25. Since Road 25 is a closed road no longer identified as a needed part of the Forest Service Road system, there is no long a need for the riprap protection of the road. The removal of the riprap will provide more desirable habitat conditions for fish rearing in the Suiattle River drainage.

NEPA Document: Decision Memo. Decision Date: November 2011

9. Marsh Pond Fish Access Restoration, contact USFS Project Liaison Phil Eidenberg-Noppe, Figure 4

Purpose and Need: There is a need for Riparian Reserves that contribute to fish productivity.

Proposed Action: Remove the nonfunctional metal fish way structure within the creek that leads to Marsh Pond to restore fish passage. Evaluate removal of a portion or all of the berm from along the north and/or west sides of the pond to further facilitate fish passage.

NEPA Document: Decision Memo or EA. Decision Date: November 2011

10. Mountain Loop Emergency Road Repairs – Snohomish County Public Works, Contact USFS Project Liaison Eric Ozog 360-691-7145 Figure 2

Purpose and Need: The Mountain Loop Highway is a National Forest Scenic Byway and a major arterial used by thousands of visitors from the Puget Sound metropolitan area. There is an ongoing need for recreational, administrative, residential, and private land access in the South Fork Stillaguamish River valley east of Verlot. There is also a need for enhanced public safety (reducing the risks inherent in additional slides), a need for the prevention of additional damage

to the roadway, and for the minimization of erosion and potential deposits of sediment into the South Fork Stillaguamish River.

Proposed Actions: Repair two sections of flood damaged road segments along the Mountain Loop Highway and prevent further damage, at M.P.'s. 19.9 (west of Camp Silverton) and M.P. 23.0 (east side of the village of Silverton). In both locations, the eastbound lane of the road was undermined by the S.F. of the Stillaguamish River in December, 2010. Repair work at both sites is ongoing under emergency repair authorities and includes excavation and placement of large riprap and boulders at the toeslope on the river's edge, to support the placement of armored fill to reconstruct and repave the road prism. At MP 19.9, the road alignment is to be shifted north approximately 10 feet for 1,000 linear feet. Snohomish County is in ongoing emergency consultations with the Forest Service and other federal and state agencies to design onsite and offsite mitigation measures.

NEPA Document: Emergency Repair – Decision date: May, 2011

11. Lower Suiattle ERFO Road 26 Repairs at MP 6.0 – Federal Highways, Contact USFS Project Liaison Jim Mitchell 360-856-2620 Figure 4

Purpose and Need: There is a need for administrative, recreational and private land access in the Suiattle River drainage, northeast of Darrington.

Proposed Actions: At MP 6.0, Road 26 will be relocated approximately 400 feet to the north from the washout and eroded river bank of the Suiattle River. The total length of realigned road will be approximately 2150 feet through previously timber harvested lands. The roadway will be paved with asphalt to a width of 18 feet. This width matches the existing roadway width.

NEPA Document: Federal Highways Categorical Exclusion. Decision Date: June, 2011

12. Upper Suiattle ERFO Road Repairs at MP 20.8, 20.9 and 22.9 - Federal Highways, Contact USFS Project Liaison Peter Wagner 360-856-2621 Figure 4

Purpose and Need: There is a need for administrative and recreational access in the upper Suiattle River drainage, northeast of Darrington.

Proposed Actions: Upper Suiattle ERFO Road Repairs at MP 20.8, 20.9 and 22.9

MP 20.8 – Move the eroded roadway alignment an estimated 15 feet into the hill through the narrowest section of roadway, with a 1h:1v backslope. The total re-aligned section is expected to be about 350 feet long, with the full cut (about 100 feet) plus the transitions to existing roadway. The proposed roadway width of 16 feet will use on-site materials for surfacing and will not be paved.

MP 20.9 – Downey Creek Bridge - Utilize the existing 115 foot long cast-in-place box girder bridge to cross the main channel of Downey Creek, with the construction of a series of bridge extensions (200 ft) to cross the floodplain at the mouth of Downey Creek. This would allow for the removal of the floodplain fill in the west approach to the bridge, and the removal of an existing 48" culvert. The bridge extension spans would be supported by piers founded on piles or spread footings that are deep enough to be safe from scour. The additional 200 feet of bridge length would provide for additional stream channel width to better accommodate flood flows and allow for natural channel processes to occur across the width of the flood plain. The new bridge spans would remain single lane.

MP 22.9 – Sulphur Creek Bridge – Repairs (as previously described in 2006) would build a concrete retaining wall at the deck edge of the Sulphur Creek Bridge, keyed into the bank. Existing on-site material would be used for the retaining wall backfill. This design increases the

area under the bridge by 15 feet, with all work outside the wetted channel. The damaged bridge railing would also be repaired or replaced.

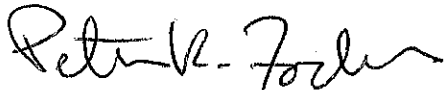
NEPA Document: Federal Highways Categorical Exclusion. Decision Date: June, 2011

A number of the proposed actions fall within categories that may exclude them from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. Those projects currently have no identified extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed actions, and they are within categories listed in 36 CFR 220.6 (d)(3) *Repair and maintenance of administrative sites*, 36 CFR 220.6 (d)(4) *Repair and maintenance of road, trails and landlines*. Categories for which a project record and decision memo are required includes: 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(1) *Construction and reconstruction of trails*, 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(3) *Approval, modification or continuation or minor special uses of National Forest System lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land*, 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(5) *regeneration of area to native species*, and 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(6) *Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement*. The decisions for projects fitting within CFR categorical exclusions will have a categorical exclusion letter signed by the District Ranger as the Responsible Official, or be documented in Decision Memos, also signed by the District Ranger as the Responsible Official. Projects led by Snohomish County or Federal Highways Administration will have environmental analysis conducted according to those agencies' directives, with decisions documented and signed by their respective responsible officials. Completion of these decision documents is expected during 2011 or early 2012.

If you have comments on these proposed actions, please submit them to Phyllis Reed by April 1, 2011 at the above address, phone 360-436-2332, email: plreed@fs.fed.us. Comments received in response to this invitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the Project Record and available for public review.

We appreciate your continued interest in the management of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

Sincerely,



PETER FORBES
District Ranger